

i magazine  
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K. Cuth





# i magazine spring 86'98



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Daydreams.....	Anonomus.....	1
Empty Trees.....	JY-37.....	1
Robot Mom.....	Sandra Dejnak.....	2
Plastic Man.....	E.S.P.....	2
Watching the Sun Rise.....	Corey Lancey.....	3
Stagnant Water.....	JY-16.....	3
Chaos.....	JMC.....	4
One River.....	Jeremy Whalen.....	4
Angel, Queen of Hearts.....	Marygail Streeter.....	5
untitled.....	Jessica Baker.....	6
I'll Stand by Me.....	Chris Banahan.....	6
Cynthia Charm.....	E.S.P.....	7-8
untitled.....	Judith Durkee.....	9
untitled.....	Jennifer Shattuck.....	9
Two Inches Short of Manhood.....	Jim Tedesco.....	10
untitled.....	Shawn Bernard.....	11
untitled.....	Ryan Ragan.....	12-13
Dedicated to Bob Gilman.....	Judith Durkee.....	13
artwork.....	unknown.....	14
Change.....	Paul Aho.....	15
Hollow.....	Cora Cleveland.....	15
The Mind's Eye.....	Val Schedin.....	16
Unspoken Incantation.....	Shawn Bernard.....	16
artwork.....	Brandi Ernst.....	17
Oz.....	Allyson.....	18
untitled.....	Shawn Flynn.....	18
Darkness and Flowers.....	Dan.....	19-27
untitled.....	Sarah Cleveland.....	27
untitled.....	Cora Cleveland.....	27
artwork.....	Brandi Ernst.....	28
Waiting.....	E.S.P.....	29
untitled.....	Sarah Cleveland.....	29
untitled.....	Sarah Elizabeth Breen.....	29
Joyful. Tired. Exhale.....	Jeff Landry.....	30-31
untitled.....	Jack Kennedy.....	32
Mother's Love.....	Roger A. Currier.....	33
untitled.....	Sean Flynn.....	33
Daddy.....	Cora Cleveland.....	34
Solstice.....	Brandi Ernst.....	34
untitled.....	Sarah Cleveland.....	35
Words.....	Cora Cleveland.....	35
Bedford Falls VA.....	E.S.P.....	35
artwork.....	Brandi Ernst.....	36
Silver & Gold.....	Jeanne Hue.....	37
Castles.....	Brandi Ernst.....	37
Pianos Playing All Night.....	Ryan Ragan.....	38
Contrast.....	Jeanne Hue.....	38
artwork.....	Kerry.....	39
The Doll and the Cocoon.....	Beth Robbins.....	40
artwork.....	Allyson.....	41



### Day Dreams

What becomes of us who dream?  
Greatness I am told.  
But I've yet to find  
my soul's salvation.  
Smiling face,  
broken inside.  
I stare blankly out the window  
at the sky,  
wishing the day away.  
My cold green eyes  
are growing weary,  
alone in a dark room  
as the day ends.  
Lying,  
but refusing to sleep.  
Drifting, but finally delivered  
to the stillness,  
It's all I wanted.

~Anonymous



### Empty Trees

Like Birds Flocking to a Tree  
We Gather Around an Idea  
Chirping Mightily  
Only to Leave It Empty Again  
Devoid of Life

JY-37



## Robot Mom

Performing my mundane tasks efficiently,  
pursuing input of family needs.  
But sometimes I feel I've blown a fuse  
because I never get a rest.

My emotions are held within,  
the forgotten human being inside  
the mechanical skeleton.

Performing to commands like a mechanical  
puppet on strings, controlled by other's fantasies,  
forgetting all my fantasies.

No time to think, to eat or sleep  
because my programming is not complete.

My programming is a characteristic of my mechanical construction.  
Experiencing occasional short circuits, in my excellent design.  
My energy is nil, I must continue on.

Because I am robot mom.

~Sandra Dejnak

## PLASTIC MAN

Binary code bit pounding  
asphalt valleys and concrete mountain top scenery  
compact digitized laser beam harmony  
prepackaged processed cheese food sustenance  
hi-fi Technicolor peace  
gluttony perpetuated paper illusion contestation  
standardized glossy pin up love  
pre-fab ab-fab fruitless utilitarian education.  
diagnostic statistical science of frustration  
machine manufactured plastic dreams  
and hi-performance chrome plated custom made man.

~ESP





Watching the sun rise  
from the bottom of the sea.

Drowning in a sea of love,  
a sea of tears--  
of a hoped tomorrow.

I looked up from the depths  
to see a light-- a reflection of  
your aura-- your smile shines  
clear through.

I see the heavens in your eyes  
and so desperately want to reach out  
to you with all my soul.  
Sacrificing anything-- for if but a fleeting...  
gentle caress.

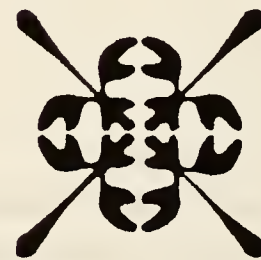
Yet all the while I speak these words  
the dreams are swept away--  
in tides of sorrow--  
knowing your heart loves not me  
but another.

Corey Lancey

Stagnant Water

An Unwanted Thought  
Spreads Outward  
Like Waves From Its Origin  
Touching Many Obstacles  
Affecting None

~JY-16



*"If we keep waiting for tomorrow, today will never come."*

*-Justin S.*



## Chaos

I live in a world without limits. Nothing to control the mind. Thoughts go uncensored. My feelings run free.

The chaotic rage of emotions clouds my vision. I cannot see. The endless struggle with the subconscious leaves me apathetic. I feel no emotion. My disillusioned perception leaves me swirling, dizzy. I cannot stand. Insanity creeps into my mind infesting my thoughts. All knowledge is forgotten. I discover with a child's wonder. All innocence is lost. I am defiled.

Freedom is such a closed mind. No other thoughts but someone else's. Freedom to think what they want me to. Self confidence in them. Knowing what I want... or at least that's what they tell me I want. The freedom to do things the way they tell me to. I am free within the wall they erect. I refuse to let them run my life, thus I live as they want me to.

Not control over destiny. No control over fate. No control over..

CHAOS

~jmc



## One River

Again, I find myself at another fork in the river.  
Like the last one, I found myself unable to choose.  
Knowing one could become rougher than  
the other, I chose neither. They both looked so  
promising, so clear, as if they needed me. Floating  
along the edge of both, I waited for nature to take  
its course. To make my choice. One sucked me in,  
and the journey began. Is this the way? I don't know,  
but the end shall tell. Maybe its competition would have  
had more to offer, but was too shy and weak to pull me in.  
Halfway down seems too late to turn back; the current too  
strong, and at the mercy of God, I pray--floating away. Just  
staying afloat becomes an endless battle, but the end is near,  
and finally I'm there, finding myself in a sea of fear. I looked  
back through soaked eyes, to see the other. Too  
far, too late--she's gone.

~Jeremy Whalen

Angel, Queen of Hearts



A white rose, representing her country.  
Her common touch, so uncommon in the Royal Family  
Windsor Castle, a Monarchy built upon centuries.  
Overlooking England was a People's Princess,  
She needing no Royal title,  
compassion her legacy,  
guided a future England toward the 21st century.

A funeral steeped in royal tradition,  
with the people ruling a day in England.  
She a catalyst to British change,  
England's Queen dressed in black,  
bows to no person,  
but for you, QUEEN OF HEARTS,  
she bowed.

The British flag flew past midnight.  
You a white rose grew, within our Global hearts,  
Your beauty glowed from inside and out,  
like the Lily, now an Angel.

Happiness you found, and a promising life,  
snuffed,  
to the stars you are in,  
and your love glowing over us.

A ride, life threatening,  
stunned, but united a Global World,  
emotionally and spiritually,  
A Global World in silence,  
mourns.

Our legend Princess of Wales,  
Diana is truly gone.  
Resting with rosary beads,  
given by Mother Theresa. Also, an angel now,  
overseeing Global World Peace.  
Farewell, Diana, farewell,  
rest your body in Althorp, North of England,  
Your soul an attendant with God.

~Marygail L. Streeter



My wings are captured in a web.  
Like a butterfly caught in a spider's  
trap  
Watching for you through the mass of humans.  
You weren't there. Eyes-  
searching, searching, searching. Lost.  
Can't find you.  
It's silly - you know.  
I think the hair on your arm was touching my arm once-  
I almost felt like a part of you.  
You didn't even realize it.  
And - when you talk - huh...  
I inhale extra long just so I can breathe in your words -  
and the air you let out.  
Sounds insane I know -  
it's my last resort...my only chance...  
Call it obsession.  
Call it what you want.  
I call it "fantasy"...  
It's like - you may not be "there" -  
but every time I close my eyes you are.  
In my dreams.  
I'm afraid to wake up...

~ Jessica Baker



### I'll Stand by Me

If the world falls down around me,  
in my spot I shall remain and persevere,  
As but one force may crush me,  
The massive hand of fear.  
As my doubters turn against me,  
I'll stand by me and fight,  
While from this war I'll not want to flee.  
I accept that I may lose if they are right.  
When the forces of a narrow mind attack,  
I'll stick to my guns,  
Even if they're wielding cannons,  
Compared to the pistols that I pack.  
And though you may come to doubt me,  
Continued will I thrive.  
So long as I stand by me,  
"I" shall always remain alive.

~ Chris Banahan

Cynthia Charm



Cynthia Charm  
was a real nice girl.  
She never did no one any harm.  
She had a silver sparkling baton she used to twirl.  
She and Chuck were homecoming queen and king.  
The blue birds used to sing.

But now a haggard and beaten middle-aged wife  
she stares into the deep black abyss of her coffee cup.  
In the prime of life  
yet feeling all used up.  
She has everything a girl could ask for  
but nothing more.

Dark secrets  
behind drawn window shades.

She's got money,  
solid and liquid assets.  
She's got a Sony  
with a library of video cassettes.  
A microwave oven  
and her husband's brutal loving.  
She's got a washing machine,  
and in the dusty attic  
an old cardboard box full of broken dreams.



When it fell apart,  
when he broke her heart...

When the mortgage fell thru,  
when she found him in the arms of another  
when the dollars dwindled to a few...  
The walls of her suburban castle crumpled  
as her drunken cheating prince stumbled  
into the darkened room.

She cried  
for something that a long time ago  
had died.





Curled up in the corner.  
Fiery tears streak down her sweet  
painted face,  
as his hard rock fists come down  
pound! pound! pound!  
on her silky soft wrinkled flesh.



The anchor man in the big screen T.V.  
reads of political polls, creating an illusion  
of rationality.  
In the darkness of night  
after the violent storm,  
feeling all used up  
she stares into the black abyss of her coffee cup.  
In the prime of life  
the battered wife  
methodically gulps down twenty mystic pills  
and the roaring drills  
inside her head cease.



Slowly the glassy kitchen haze  
grows thicker.  
The warning lights flicker.  
Soft glowing darkness greets her.

One thirty-five a.m.—the ambulance  
arrives,  
a little too late  
—just on time.

Cynthia Charm  
was a real nice girl.  
She never did no one any harm.  
She had a silver sparkling baton she used to twirl.  
She and Chuck were homecoming queen and king.  
Once again the blue birds sing.

~ESP



So you want to play hard ball? I can't, not the way you grown-ups do. I'm little, can't you see? Look at my flowered dress and chunky fingers. Look at the shadows beneath my eyes. That's from never getting enough. But it is not sleep. It is not food. At least not table food. There's a hole in my heart. Pierced by the withholding of nurturing. I huddle alone. Fueled by anger, frustration; starved by unintentional negligence. I carry them around like a forty pound sack, welting my neck. It burns my flesh and strangles my insides.

I carve my name on the weathered barn; near the bottom where rhubarb returns each year without prompting. Lizzie. I live. No one will stomp out my arrival. I play ball. Underneath the barn there is a life of its own. Gathering up my game I return to my victims. WHACK, WHACK, WHACK; forty times on the chopping block! I axe my mother. Then I raise my clenched fist and chop away my father, my brothers, and my sister with a good promise of more. I take a whack at society. Snuffing out ole Olga, was next. She is the most tormenting first grade teacher a student could fathom.

Trembling, I go to the cellar window, webbed and stained with yesterdays. As I wipe a spot to peek out, a reflection of a very vulnerable small child, chilled at the thought of her deeds, stares back at me. I had chipped away at my spirit till the soul was as black as the coal bin that stood next to me. I had killed off the love of parents, sister, and brothers. Hatred had hardened my heart in the first grade of school. Society rules were tough but I had learned how to play hard ball. I went out from the musty cellar and turned my face up towards the sun. I looked all around. My heart was pulsing with life! But, it was for the sun, the moon, the stars and the long grass that brushed against me. Glancing up again I see the name Lizzie, permanently carved, I live.

Lizzie



~Judith Durkee

As the rain fell one January night  
Soft fingers with wet palms caressed me.  
She came to me  
Her soul painted on mine with one quick slice of a scalpel  
Blood dripping  
Her cries echoing  
and my wretched scream...

~Jennifer Shattuck



*Times of melancholia seep through walls of rigid  
resistance, conforming to the core of one stone cold  
heart.*

-A.



## Two Inches Short of Manhood

For some, the measure of manhood comes on the battlefield. For others, it may be the playing field, the weight room, or standing up to the school - yard bully. And for some, it might come in the quiet observation of the health club locker room. For me that "golden moment" when my manliness was to be proven to the world was at the Topsfield fairgrounds. It was a chilly October evening and the air was filled with the unmistakable aroma of fried dough, cotton candy and nature's beasts. No, I wasn't driving a team of muscle-bound Clydesdales in the horse pulls. No, I wasn't the one who caught the greased pig, shaved a sheep in fifteen seconds, or worked the truck accessory booth. I was the guy who was trying to ring the bell at the top of that long, vertical pole with a wooden mallet. You know, the one strong men walk up to and smash, sending a small metal shuttle up a towering shaft past all those flamboyant little titles that get more socially acceptable the closer they are to the bell. The bell that echoes over the fairground and everyone turns to see this man standing there with huge forearms and a strong back, as they point and say, "There's a Real man!" Tonight was finally my time. The bell would toll for me! I paid my dollar and stepped up to the test.

I stood there facing the giant challenge like a modern day Ulysses. That bell staring down at me like the singular eye of a Cyclops, looking down and laughing at my small frame and attempt. For a moment, as if I had eyes in the back of my head, I could see them, the gathering crowd. I could see my girlfriend there too. I so very desperately wanted to win her a stuffed prize. Most of all I wanted them to see her with a Real man! I wanted to turn from ringing the bell and triumphantly extend my reward to her. She would hug or kiss me; her affection my real reward. I grasped the hammer with both hands and jerked it from where it lay on the ground. I was fooled by its looks. The hammer was very light, and I staggered back from using too much force to lift such a light object. Fear struck me as I thought, "This hammer doesn't have enough weight to it!" I then realized I was going to have to put all I had into this swing. I had wasted enough time... I swung the hammer back and brought it around in one beautiful, graceful, exquisite arc. The head of the hammer touched down squarely on the plate, in perfect position. The plate pivoted on its fulcrum and shot the shuttle upward toward its destination.

Up past limp-wristed!

Up past bedwetter!

Up past nose picker!

Up past momma's boy!

Past dude!

Past big guy!

Stopping two inches short of the bell?

Stopping two inches short of Real man!

~Jim Tedesco

We are numb inside our cocoons of flesh and bone,  
Out for ourselves,  
Someone tell me when the mainstay of life changed,  
Water to money,

Where is the base of our problem?  
Hidden deep below the Vatican  
Maybe the Pentagon is just empty inside five walls,  
Maybe my spirit is being drained inside the vastness  
of the earth,

Moon and stars, bees and trees  
earth and air,  
An intricate system in continuous development and evolution,  
each and every element in love  
each dependent on infinite reason;  
Dependent without panic or greed.

Man to man we are out for self-preservation,  
Is it our dog eat dog world that makes us so hard,  
Darwin knew that we all evolved,  
Christ knew that we were all so ignorant that he spoke  
in parables; only the pure could understand truly.  
Even Dalmer knew that we don't understand what this is all  
about, each postulating hypothesis, each out in search.  
Maybe for success, money, acceptance, independence,  
safety, god, enlightenment, ancient knowledge...

Will we always kiss and rebuke what we don't understand?  
Another divine revelation covered up and forgotten,  
Another enlightened soul murdered for not conforming,  
Or just a simple child overlooked and neglected;  
holding the key to this whole puzzle,  
unraveling the bonds of mankind's true purpose and destiny.

Have we forgotten the purpose of the mundane existence  
in the passive and the aggressive; an answer,  
Lost somewhere in the past  
And still uncovered in present dogma.

~Shawn Bernard



The pompous blabbering through endless phone lines.

It is when we are together and nude.  
Black skins, like crows, like demons  
in velvet shoes, dressed to the teeth  
with the sweet actions of Our father, the gay Satan.

Sub conscience nudity is Jesus disguised  
like an anvil, it is the age of discovery,  
the age of fame, the age of gay friends that fall  
in love with their best mates (who turn out to  
be female.)

Hello? God? Are you there?

We're all God on the inside.  
Even in fits of suicide we are God,  
or at least we possess him in our soul.  
Ironic, isn't it?

The angel:  
"What's ironic?"

The demon:  
"The fact that God wears a disguise."

The angel:  
"What do you mean disguise?"

The demon:  
"God hides itself behind evil."

The angel:  
"If you could convince me of that I would call that ironic!"

(a short pause)

The angel:  
"Are you going to try?"

The demon:  
"No. The fact that you must indulge in the soul of yourself before God will prove itself to you. After all,  
evil is easier to complete, and that takes no true self examining."



The angel:

"The more I know you, the more I think of you as blind lunatic making an attempt to claim the words of your inner voice as rational...But the more honest I become with myself, the more I realize that you and I are insane just the same."

The demon:

"I do not waiver the term 'Angel,' and the hearts of my brothers be not looked upon as, as gentle as the white clothed, halo, dress of your mates. But this I tell you out of fear and out of protection of your own soul; do not think that my way is the most lustrous, for the men in my mind are not kind. Be the angel."

The angel:

"It is you whom I am in love with."

The demon:

"Don't get involved with me."

The angel:

"You wouldn't tell me that if you didn't feel for me...."

The demon:

"True...I must be the only demon with a conscience."

~Ryan Regan



Dedicated to our Teacher, Colleague, and Friend,

Bob Gilman

Who knew...

That the touch of his apple cheek flushed color into our own. That a sweet hello was a last good-bye.

Who knew...

That his contagious smile would be perennially affixed in our minds. Or his surrendering eyes would now meet with a new found province.

Or that his gifted acceptance for who we are became his glory in a friend and a humanitarian.

Who knew...

As he dispersed his rewards -- gleaned his fields with the wide eyes of a child -- he'd open so many doors.

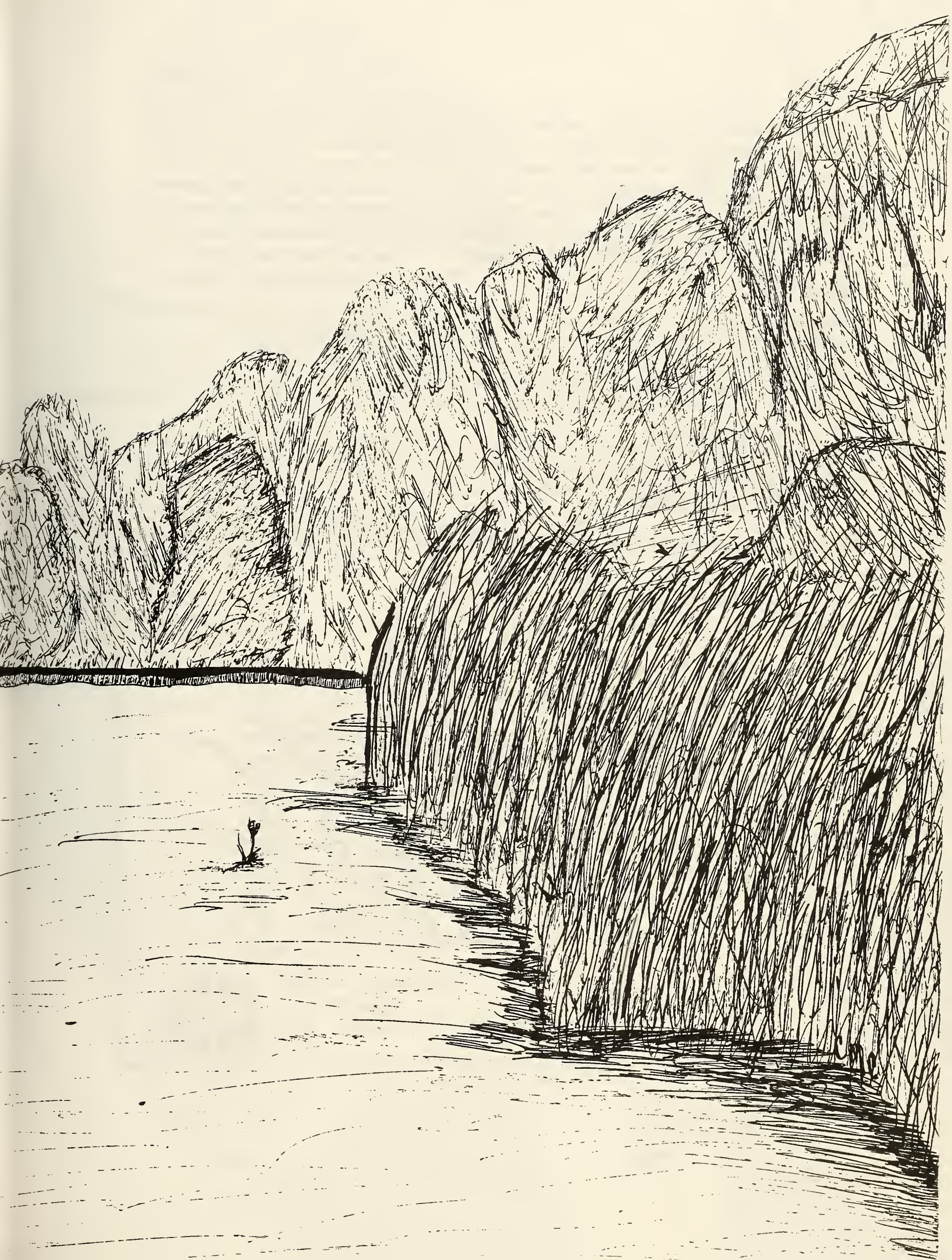
A brief worldly interlude

sealed in an envelope of mystery shadowing my bereaved heart shadowing yours,

Who knew.

~ Judith Durkee







## Change

Two years time,  
that's all it has been.  
One tenth of my life.  
It seems like a lot,  
but it has been fast,  
faster than I could have ever imagined.

All the trips,  
here, there  
nowhere special.  
All the nights.  
They never amounted to much.

Once, I believed in hope,  
but I cannot anymore.  
Like the cycles of the moon,  
I can only count on change.

Have you changed?

I'm where you left me.  
It has been cold ever since.

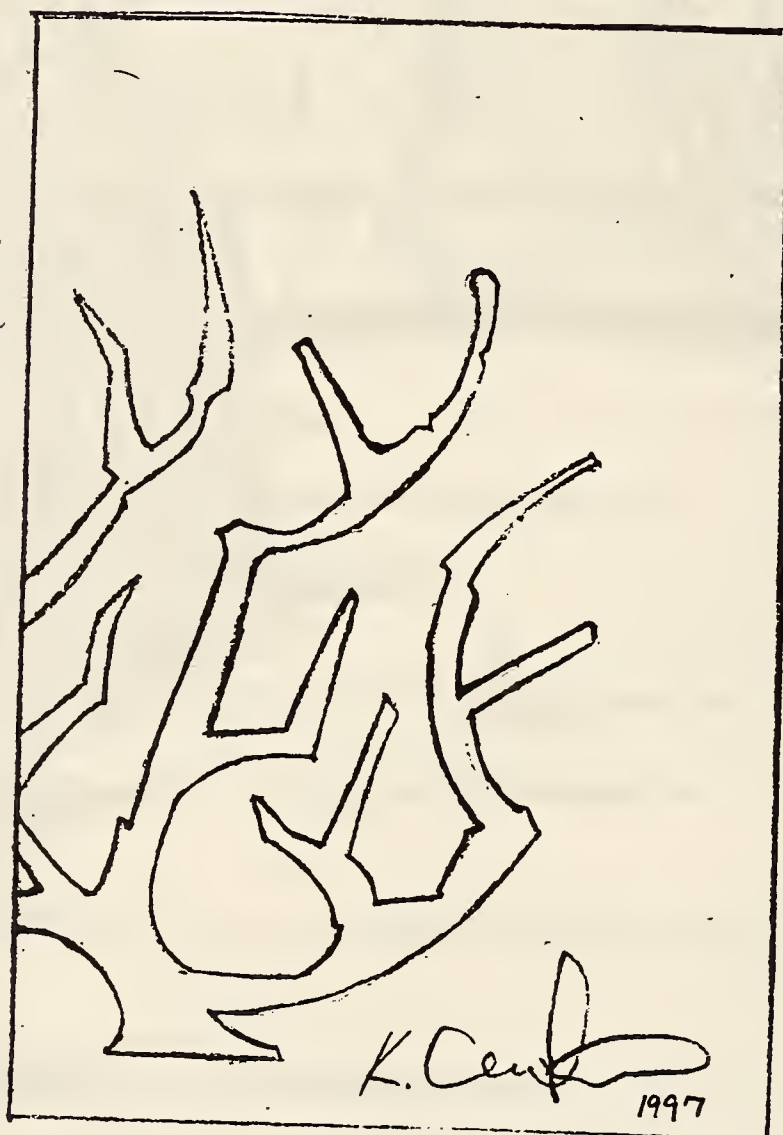
~Paul Aho

## Hollow

walking through an empty abyss  
thinking of what happened to this,  
as I sat and listened to the words  
my heart broke into pieces,  
onto the floor with a single crash  
there are no words that can bring it back,  
so long ago it seemed,  
when we were one.

~Cora Cleveland

99





## The Mind's Eye

The exact date is of little importance to anyone but me. Suffice it to say that I have dreaded the arrival of this day for many years - exactly how many, I'm not sure -- but many. Surprisingly, the day starts like every other day with my looking forward to what the day will bring. But this day isn't like any other- - it's my birthday-- my 60th birthday. I'm not prepared for it and I don't even like the sound of it. Sixty -- it has a hard sound, not soft like 30, 40, or even 50. Strangely enough, I didn't feel 60, but then again, I didn't know what 60 was supposed to feel like. Perhaps my parents played a practical joke on me when the year of my birth was recorded and they had planned to tell me about it later in life so that we could all enjoy a good laugh. If that's what they did, they forgot to tell me about it before they went to meet their maker.

So here I am officially called a Senior Citizen as impossible as it seems, at least to me. There are perks that go along with this 60 thing... wisdom (if I knew then what I know now), retirement, discounts, and most of all freedom. I like that last thing -- freedom -- sort of the same feeling I had when I was a teenager when i got my driver's license. But still -- 60 - -sounds old, doesn't it? I can't change the numbers and I had to accept the fact that the years are moving forward, and so the celebration of my second 30th birthday went very well.

When the day ended I was pleasantly surprised to discover that I didn't feel any differently than I had felt the previous day. As a matter of fact, catching a glimpse of my image in the mirror, I was relieved to see that the same me was still there. Sure thing, it was the same me that had been looking back at me all these years.

That teenager with the brand new license.

~~~~~ ~ Val Schedin  
Unspoken Incantation

by candlelight,  
i am gentle hermit,  
rain patter on my shelter,  
mindful and selfless Zen,  
the sound of Tao,  
the only word with no

pure grammatical explanation.  
and raindrop chorus  
a meditation in itself,  
one raindrop in billions;  
the sound of one raindrop  
falling.

an incantation  
for those with ears.  
spirit reminder,  
gently wears the stone  
of my being  
and dissolves my learned ways  
back to the essence of being  
uncarved,  
unborn,

can you understand existence  
of pure nonexistence.  
infinite empty infinity,  
yet infinitely whole.

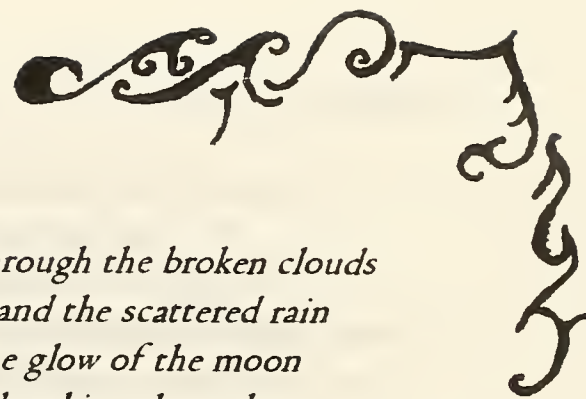


and being,  
a lazy and rapid river.  
moving and being moved by  
the hand of our mother;  
sound of one hand  
clapping.









*All is not well in the land of Oz.  
The flowers have died,  
there is no more bloom.  
Birds that had song,  
sing only of silence.  
The world has ended  
as we know it.  
Dorothy's shoes  
will bring nobody home  
and Toto will pad  
into oncoming traffic.  
I am not dead,  
the world is not round.  
The trees that had leaves,  
have since blown away.  
The waves still recede  
each day at dawn  
and on as time goes  
the sun will rise,  
scorching the Scarecrow  
and rusting the Tin One,  
whose heart does not beat  
for the better.  
Backwards we go,  
though we never began.  
A cloud becomes fog  
and a clown claws himself  
out of the sky.  
The Witch knows her triumph  
and cackles it loudly.  
The Lion has gone  
so deep into himself  
he shall never be scared again...*



*Through the broken clouds  
and the scattered rain  
The glow of the moon  
breaking through  
shining on different parts of the land  
It hits me for a moment  
silhouetting my body  
to the ground  
for a moment entrancing me  
My eyes fixed upwards  
on her pale skin  
seeing her babies scattered  
around her like kittens  
How many times in history  
have there been nights like this  
How many times has this fullness  
graced the presence of someone like me  
I sit, I wonder  
The sky is covered again  
by a cloud darker than black  
the rain comes in force  
pelting my body everywhere  
giving me no preparation for defense  
not that I actually care.*

*~Sean Flynn*

*Allyson*

*When the film in our mind is developed, we will be  
able to distinguish actual events from dreams.*

*-Collins*

## Darkness and Flowers

By Dan

Dan got out of work at twelve a.m. showered and was on his computer at one. The light from the monitor was the only illumination that shone through the darkness of his bedroom and his life. He poked commands into keyboard, then stopped to turn on a fan as a symphony of beeps, and buzzes came from his desktop. He sat down and logged on to a chat network. He called up a list of available channels for the evening. After several minutes, the list was downloaded.

He turned around and turned on the television. It was a rebroadcast of an entertainment magazine show. He turned in his chair completely and watched.

"Even after Ellen's controversial coming out episode, religious and conservative, family orientated companies have refused to buy advertizing air time..."

He changed the channel.

"Proclaimed writer and director Clive Barker came out as gay to an unsurpassed following of readers yesterday and wrote a ground breaking novel about the human species and the role of gays in it. Let's hear from the author himself..."

Click.

"What we need to do is to stop typecasting everyone as natural born heterosexuals, and gays as exceptional deviants. Without the societal mindset, and as coming out conditions improve, that one in ten may be leap to one in five..."

Click.

It was a cartoon of a cat who thought he was a dog. He looked into a puddle of water and saw a cat. The cat started barking and growling at the reflection of him self. When he realized what he was, he stopped barking and started chasing mice. Dan turned off the television.

Dan heard the computer beep and turned to face the screen. He clicked on the icon for one of the gay chat channels and started to type.

He saw some of his reflection on the screen.

Dan was only seven years old when he witnessed the fight. His baby sitter, Scot, was pitted against his next door neighbor, Jake. He remembered the intense faces of the of the two boys as they struggled to force each other down to the ground. How they fell into and pried themselves out of holds and pins. The way they rolled around exchanging punches like kisses and caresses. Both boys were trying to pull off the other's shirt. Dan sat and watched as his heart beat rapidly and his breath became shorter. Mike lost his shirt in the battle and as promised gave Jake his Coke.

"Think you can take me on, tiger?" Scot asked Dan.

"No" Dan replied giggling.

---

Dan was called into work to water the bushes. It was something they told him to do a few times a week with river water that he would tote back and forth to the plants. "Do it anytime. Just get it done," his boss instructed. He chose to come in

at night to do it. There were no bosses looking down on him, no hot sun, nor traffic



to worry about. It was just him, his thoughts, and the cool darkness that surrounded him.

One night, a jogger stopped him and complemented him on his work.

"Thanks, but I didn't plant this." Dan said.

"Who did?"

"The landscaping company we hired. I think they're called Hedge and Rock."

"These are lovely Ezangias." He said. "The flowers come out in mid June."

"They should be lovely," Dan said.

"Yes, and they smell good too. Take care." The man took off leaving Dan only time enough to wish him a good night.

Dan moved on to the next bush wondering if he was a flower bud or if he had bloomed already and longed for a fresh new start. The question on his mind was whether or not he was gay. That night on the net, he would talk more with that gay guy from Chicago, that other one from Cincinnati, and, over the course of the next month, countless others from around the world.

He asked questions like, "Am I gay if..."

"Maybe I am not gay because..."

They only asked more questions of him and they gave opinions on whether or not they thought he was gay. One even suggested that if he slept with a woman and then a man, he could decide which he liked better. No one gave the answers or the certainty that he so desperately wanted to find.

On the net, as in real life, Dan found his fair share of people who told him that he is going to burn in hell. Most of the time it would be 'bashers' that came into the room and flooded the screen with hateful messages about gay people. Other times it became more personal. Like that time he got some private messages from a man who called himself Peter26. The first questions were just usual. How do you do? Where are you from? Tell me about your self. He answered all of these. When Dan asked him what it was like coming out to his family, he asked Dan if he was going to come out as queer. "Maybe," he typed. Peter26 responded, "Well, you shouldn't let your dick destroy your family. Why don't you do yourself, your family and this whole fucking country a favor and try sucking on the end of a 44 instead of another cock?"

He then took to gay porn he had gotten off the net. He studied each and every contour of the men, who appeared alone or with each other in full nudity and full explicitness, looking for clues, and searching for arousal. Dan knew he was attracted to men now. But sometimes fear was too overpowering for him, and his desire was forced down by his past.

---

Dan got home from high school and switched on the television. It was mid March of his freshman year and a week break was fast approaching. He hated the dark solitude that came also. He changed channels until he found one that interested him. It was Donahue.

"Today, on Donahue, we are interviewing homosexual men who dress like woman and seduce and sometimes sleep with perfectly heterosexual men who don't

have a clue what they're getting into..."

Dan's father came into the room and laughed at the jokes and pure oddity of the situations. Dan just sat and watched. His mother came into the room and that's when things went awry.

"I can't believe they put this shit on during the day when my children can be watching. How can you just sit on your ass when Dan could be getting ideas? They're all filthy faggots. Donahue has so many faggots on his show; I bet he's a faggot too. They're all sick. I feel like I am going to puke."

Father turned to Dan and asked, "Still got those Playboys under your bed, son?"

"You want them back?"

"Nope."

---

Dan was sitting on the couch watching television, when his mother came into the room.

"Son, I think we need to talk," she said.

"Yea?"

"I found those pictures on your computer and it made me sick. How could two men want to fuck each other." She stared crying. "I brought you to church. Made you join The Boy Scouts. I did my damndest trying to raise you, and how do you repay me?"

"Mom..."

"You decide to become a faggot. People will think I did this to you. Who got you into this?"

"What..."

"Who recruited you?"

Dan got up and ran to his bedroom. In his bed, he lay still. His father opened the door later and stuck his head in. He shook it in disapproval. Suddenly, like an injury you don't feel until you see, the pain hit, and he pushed his hands into his face trying to stop the tears, but they wouldn't stop flowing.

He opened his eyes and he was no longer in bed. It took him a while to realize he was in his grave. His family wore a shade of black as constant as the dark. He tried to get up but couldn't.

"I'm still alive. I'm still human. Let me out. Don't bury me. Don't shut me out." He shouted, but his lips produced no sound.

A barrier of ice formed a few inches above his face, and he struck it with all his might. The blanket flew into the air and he drew a quick gasp. The pillows were stained with sweat. He got out of bed, stumbled to the kitchen and took a large gulp of Coke. After he went to the bathroom, he took a moment to study himself in the mirror. He saw his own reflection but didn't know who he saw.


---

Dan got time off from his job to join his family for the Fourth of July in



Plymouth. He was on the road at one a.m.. He lit a Cigar, opened a Coke and brought along his favorite penny candy. He put the top of his Sunbird down and blew smoke up into the night. It left a trail as he backed out of his driveway. He went east on route two and down a shortcut that involved 190 and 117. From there he went on 495 and got off at route 44. He loved to drive at night. He didn't see another car until he was on 495. It was as if the world had stood still for him. He liked that. No, he loved it.


When he arrived at Plymouth, he had no trouble finding the hotel they were staying at. His mother was in bed, when he showed up at two a.m. She let him in and was surprised to see him. He said that he would take his bed in a few minutes. After removing his shirt, he walked out to the stone patio over looking the sea. During the day, when it was exceptionally clear you could see the Provincetown tower from where he stood. He guessed where it was and stared at it in his mind and heart. There were twenty-six miles of darkness between him and there. He crossed his arms like a sailor facing the sea of unknown and wanting to know. He breathed a deep sigh and went in to go to bed.



Dan was ten years old when his mother insisted that he take swimming lessons for the sake of safety and enjoyment. It was at the community pool where he learned. The locker rooms were on the same level as the pool. He changed in the booth.

There was a balcony on each side of the pool with seats where his mother would sit and shout words of encouragement down to him. His swimming instructor, Ohmar, was always in the water coaxing him in with his open arms. Finally, he jumped.

Once he was in, Ohmar took him in his arms and threw him. Dan screamed, but when he landed safely, he went back to him begging to be thrown again, wanting the man's arms around him. His handsome face, his furry chest, and his smile all made him want to be thrown.



The next morning Dan got out of bed at eleven and sat down at a picnic table with his aunt to eat a banana and talk about last night's drive up. He finished his banana and got up to look out upon the sea. He let his eyes scan the horizon trying to see if he could spot the Provincetown tower. He thought he saw it a few times only to have it turn out to be a sailboat or a ship's smoke. He still found hope, however, in the search and wonder.

His uncle, Chet, sat on a wooden fence that separated the patio from the slope down to the ocean. He was a man who had once been in perfect shape. That wasn't so anymore. His face was starting to wrinkle, his hair was graying and his gut was starting the middle age spread.

Dan stepped over the fence and perched him self next to him.

"Look who's up," Chet said.

"Yea, I decided to come up last night when I was still awake."

"Smart."

"What do you see?"

"I am watching a oil barge come into the canal."

"Oh yea, I see," Dan said pointing and squinting. "Do you think you can see the P-town tower from here?" Dan dared to ask.

"Not today," he replied. "Too hazy."

"Ever been there?"

"Yes, many years ago. Me and a few buddies went down there."

"What was it like?"

"Sucked. Couldn't pick up any of the girls." He laughed. "I think you'd like it with all the writer's seminars and art galleries up there."

"I don't think I'd be comfortable around all the queers," Dan said, knowing that he longed to satisfy his wonder in such a town.

"You know what I think about them?" Chet asked.

"What?"

"Each to their own, I say. Of course, I like girls too much."

Dan's cousin, Mark, joined the conversation.

"Yea, I been to P-town a few weeks ago. Not a bad place, but I couldn't stand all the fags coming on to me. Are you alone? Do you have the time? How do you like the town? How do you do? I couldn't stand it."

"Really, I thought about driving down there to see the art gallery and..."

"As soon as you got out of your convertible they'll bend you over. They won't let you get away from them."

"I don't think I am that attractive," Dan said, holding in his anger by trying to create humor.

"No, you're just what they want." He walked away laughing.

Later that day Mark and another one of Dan's cousins, Craig, approached him, asking him if he wanted to go to the golf driving range and knock a few balls. He agreed, and after the top was down on his convertible, they were off.

Maybe their intention was to reinforce his straightness, maybe it was just to hurt him, maybe they were just trying to force him out of the closet or maybe they didn't have a clue. Dan had no idea why they said the things they did.

"Just three studs out on the town, Said mark.

"Just three heterosexual men cruising for sex," Craig replied.

"We're no fags."

"No." sas all Dan could say.

"We're no pansies," Craig said.

"No swishes," Mark said.

"No fruits," Craig said.

"No faggots," Mark said.

"No homos," Craig said.

"No Sally boys," said Mark.

"No we're not." Dan said with the heaviest voice he could form.

They played golf as Dan tried not to think about the things they said.

That night Dan sat looking at the sea separating him self from Provencetown.



It was a little colder than usual, and since he and his immediate family got back from supper early, he was the only one on the patio. He wanted to run down the slope and over the rocks with the agility of a madman. He wanted to cast himself into the cold sea and start swimming in the direction of the tower. He wanted to swim until the questions no longer haunted him. He wanted to swim until he drowned.

---

Later, after his vacation, Dan went back to work. There was a house that his company bought for use of office space and departmentalization. They used the two rooms on the second floor as an apartment. The old tenant moved out about a month ago, and Dan enjoyed the luxury of being able to clean whenever he felt like it. He was let down when told the new chemist would soon be living there. This attitude was turned when he saw him. He was gorgeous.

He chatted with him to find out his name was Matt, then continued on for another thirty minutes asking him where he was from and how he's doing whatever he's doing. Occasionally he would visit him upstairs to look at a new video game or Matt's stereo. He was mature and made Dan feel like a child again. He loved that in a mate.

He could hardly contain how ecstatic he was when he heard a rumor that Matt, who was nicknamed Rainbow, was gay. He asked questions of his other friends hoping, but they all said he was straight. Dan still would not take that for an answer.

For the next few weeks, Dan passed back and forth in front of the stairs leading to Matt's apartment thinking about knocking on his door and asking him right out if he was gay. A couple of times he got determined enough to get half way up the stairs before he chickened out.

The answer to his question was brought up one sad evening. Dan arrived at the house to clean and found a woman there. He didn't say anything to her. This was possibly out of shyness, or possibly out of anger at her for being there. He ran the vacuum all the time he was cleaning to try and cover up the sound of Matt and that girl having sex.

When Dan was finished with the house he frowned, put his car into gear, and started to drive to the main office building where he would spend six more hours cleaning and alone. When he parked his car, he felt a tear on the side of his face. When Dan feels pain, a common thing in his life, he notices things that others would overlook. He saw that the flowers on the Ezangias had wilted and had fallen to the ground, like angels cast down from heaven to rot in the soil below. What a picture of how I feel, Dan thought.

Dan became bitter and deeply depressed for the next few months. He only occasionally came out of the office to chat with his coworkers, who told him that what he needed to shake the blues was a girlfriend, whore, bitch, or any other heterosexual term they could think of. Dan always politely turned them down.

He didn't leave the house too much either. For a whole month, the only reason he left the house was to go to work. Where else was there for him? He felt as if the walls of his life were closing in on him, and the only place he could stay without being crushed was in the closet.

One night, when Dan was at work, he was rinsing the dirt and disinfectant

from his mops, trying not to get any of it on himself. Rick was also in the room. He was talking on the phone. Dan and Rick had always been good friends as long as they both worked there. But when Rick told Dan about how he hates niggers, Dan tried to avoid contact with him. The final blow that destroyed what was left of their friendship was soon to come.

"Dan's here. Do you know him? Well you graduated with him." Rick said into the phone, then turned to Dan.

"Hey, Dan, want to talk to Missy?" Rick said.

"No thanks," He said.

"He says he's busy," Rick said into the phone. "Do you want to go out with him? He's desperate for a girlfriend."

Dan felt his rage rise until he was beating the dirt out of the mop. Eventually Rick told her good bye and hung up. Rick got up and started for the door.

"Hold on a second," Dan said forcefully. "I don't want you spreading around that I am desperate for a girlfriend."

"What are you talking about?" he asked. "Your not gay are you, Dan?"

"What if I am?"

"Then I'd have to throw you through this window, and then you'll be all cut up, and we'll call that a fag bashing. So, now, Dan, are you gay?"

Dan now noticed the considerable size difference between him and Rick.

"None of your damn business," Dan said.

"Then I guess we're not friends anymore."

"We never were, asshole." Dan said. "Just keep yourself out of my fucking sight."

The confrontation was over when Rick walked away. Dan breathed a sigh of relief.

He felt he was a homo without a clue about himself and without a place in a straight world. He felt frustration too, in that time. Real hard frustration from going to work and trying to hide what he felt for some of the men who worked there. Once the frustration pushed him to smash his fist into the overhead light in the kitchen, showering himself in sharp glass and plastic. "What the hell is happening to me?" he screamed as the electrical current flowed through him like the blood that was now dripping off his elbow on to the floor.

---

Dan met Stan when he was still in cub scouts and his father was the Chief. Dan's mother was bringing some cookies for the bake sale when they met. They started talking about Missile Command and other video games for the Atari 2600 and their friendship bloomed. They had great times together at the movies, in the pool, and on the back porch where Stan taught Dan how to play Dungeons and Dragons.

"It's like a video game," he told him.

"How bright are the graphics?" Dan asked.

"As bright as your imagination wants them to be."

Dan felt complete when he was with Stan.

One afternoon, Stan told Dan that there was something that he wanted to



show him. It was in Stan's room where he took out a shoe box and opened it up. Inside was a stack of pornographic magazines. Dan stood behind him and looked on as Stan opened one of them. It was an older woman with her clothing hastily torn half off and her feet in different time zones.

"Pretty cool, huh?" Stan said tucking the box under his bed like he was protecting his very own personal treasure.

"I never saw anything like this before," Dan confessed. "Where did you get this stuff?"

They both sat together and read for a while. He gave Dan a couple of magazines that he said he was finished with. Dan took them home and added them to the Playboys he already had. Dan lay in his bed and read them under the cover of another book, usually a school book. "Just studying" was the crafted lie he told when asked what he was reading.

The curiosity he had always had about girls was being eased as he thumbed through the pages of explicit pictures and stories. This and the idea of having something that none of the other schoolboys had was exciting to him.

Dan was heart broken when he heard that Stan's mother threw out their forbidden treasure. But he rejoiced when he found that his father had a vast collection of pornography hidden in the workshop. He would give some to Stan, not for money, but to spend more time with him. They sat together and, again, they read the books. Dan loved pornography but nowhere near as much as loved the devotion in Stan's eyes as he studied each of the pages.

A few years later Stan became distant, leaving Dan with just the pornography to keep him company.

---

A sweet old lady, his grandmother was. Sweet to him and his father that is. This mother and sister, there was an overcast of resentment. Dan hated that part of her. She lived in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, one of his favorite towns. She had family members, none of which Dan could remember the names of, to keep her company. Dan, his sister, and parents would go up every other month stay the night and help with her household chores. That meant that she would have to stop talking to her husband, who was dead for five years now.

That labor day they went up to help her get her house ready for winter. Dan recognized the streets and buildings of a town that he loved. There was hard work ahead for them, but he knew they would be rewarded with dinner and a trip to the mall where Dan would hide behind a freshly bought magazine and try to spot out other gay people.

On the morning of the day they left Dan said he was going out for a walk.

"Don't go near Cloey Island." Grandmother warned.

"Why's that?" Dan asked.

"They will like you there." She replied swishing her words and flapping her hand in an effeminate manner.

"O.K. I'll be sure avoid it."

Dan walked along the sidewalks of the city, window shopping the countless

stores and specialty shops. He was close enough to the ocean to smell the salty air. He passed a couple of gay bars which he distinguished by a pink triangle or rainbow flag on the door. He just smiled and passed them by. He stopped at a newsstand and bought a copy of Out, although he was far from out himself.

The flowers came out again, but this time they were around his grandmother's coffin. When Dan knelt in front of her coffin, he didn't say any Hail Mary's or Our Father's. After all, they were just words. He just asked for her to accept him for who he is, whatever that was.

Her funeral was the first time Dan had set foot into a church in a good four years. He hated every minute of it as much as he hated himself for not crying. But the day before, when he was waiting in the car for his family to buy plates for the festivities after the funeral, he turned on the radio and the song was Led Zeppelin's Stairway to Heaven. He did all the crying he needed to right then and there.

Dan had to look twice to see what he was saw in the sky when they buried her. In a clear blue sky there was a cross made of two narrow lines of cloud. Dan ran to get his mother and showed her the finding.

"Spooky, huh?" she said.

"No," Dan said. "It's about hope."



*I walk slowly*

*Smelling the leaves  
I think of him  
What happened  
Was I his tree  
and he my leaf  
that eventually falls*

*~Sarah Cleveland*

*Long ago there was no pain  
only joy of the love I felt  
now all that's left is my  
aching heart  
and its wounded beat*

*~Cora Cleveland*







## *Waiting*

*He aches  
and he shakes  
and sometimes he wets the bed  
waiting for the inevitable  
dead  
He lies  
in bed  
Takes his meals in his room  
spoon-fed  
Sometimes his thinking is not quite clear  
Is there anyone there?  
Is there anyone who cares?  
Among ancient infants  
and white wall stares  
he sits  
waiting for the inevitable  
unacceptable  
uncomprehendable  
unpredictable  
unjust  
end  
hopes to be rescued  
or at least remembered  
but can say not a word  
he aches  
and he shakes*

~ESP



*Why don't you go walk off that ledge  
You would be nicer if you were dead  
Trying to get into my head  
While I just bleed, bleed, bleed  
I go insane when you breathe  
I want you dead  
I want to see your blood  
Not mine on the ground  
You for once, not me  
I don't know why you do this*

~Sarah Cleveland

*Where is he?  
the man I fell in love with  
Hidden behind those eyes  
sedated  
Where are you?  
my long lost love  
You turned away  
alone  
Where do you go?  
down the path  
Like so many who have gone before  
disillusioned  
What can I do?  
but stay and love  
I've tried it all time and again  
frustrated*



~Sarah Elizabeth Breen



*Joyful. Tired. Exhale.*

*I.*

*God is emptiness.*

*God is space unfillable by emotion.*

*He can never be anything human.*

*He is nothing more than*

*a tear of happiness*

*a tear of grief*

*a tug on your shirt-tail*

*or*

*a shrug on your shoulders*

*God is the space between*

*two lovers' lips—*

*immeasurable and*

*unauthoritative*

*God is man.*

*Man is not God.*

*A church is a beautiful place.*

*But it is not His home.*

*He resides in your heart.*

*God belongs in every man's heart—*

*—although he cannot belong to any man.*

*So many men try to define God  
but He is unconquerable:*

*To define is to conquer.*

*God is an exhale.*

*God is a sun-drenched*

*yawning, sleepy cat.*

*There is nothing to*

*wonder about God—*

*No thinking involved.*

*To feel is to be heavenly.*

*To move the pen thinking*

*from the back of the mind.*

*God is NOTHING!*

*There are so many things I  
could not be if I were God.*

*But I am not God.*

*I am a man.*

*What can I not do?*

*II.*

*Here on earth I am safe*



*capable of great wealth  
fantastic words  
and protection is no problem.  
I can destroy.  
I can create anew.*



*But death is final.*



*III.*

*Since God is words,  
and I am a writer of words  
am I traitor, thief or saint?*



*I speak for God  
-and God is the human heart-  
God speaks for me  
-I am not God; I am not nothing-  
I speak for man  
I destroy only to create anew-  
My soul-  
thrown down  
-shattering to ten million pieces-  
only to strengthen and become beautiful.*



*IV.*

*The last lesson:*



*Not only seeing everything/nothing-  
but seeing life for what it is.  
Never think the lesson is over,  
for that is the purpose of life.  
An old soul is tired of living.  
Many have drunk themselves to death.*



*Live up to His expectations  
and breathe like never before!*



*This is not the time for death, but for celebration!  
and so I celebrate-  
but I do not smile,  
for I am tired.  
I am the Living Dead.  
Wise.  
Tired.  
Lonesome.  
Stupid.  
Empty and Everything.*



*~Jeff Landry*



*The looking glass didn't shatter instantly when it hit the ground. The stained and polished wooden frame went first, cracking and splitting apart at the corner of the rectangle. When the wood had ripped apart enough so that the glass hit the ground, the cracking sound was replaced by the tinkle one would expect from the breaking of a mirror. The man who had just carried it out the door and onto the sidewalk looked between his feet, and saw hundreds of bits of his face reflecting back at him.*

*The door through which he had just carried the antique hang-on-the-wall mirror was still open, as was the back door of the car it was to enter. Looking first at his feet, he tiptoed carefully around the broken glass and down the street. He noticed how warm the sun felt on his shoulders and took off his jacket. He looked up, but stared on absently, and hung his jacket on a nearby hedge. It fell and he returned to walking, looking at his feet. People had begun to look out the windows of the brownstones now, and he noticed his feet.*

*He looked up now, and straight ahead. He reached out as he turned the corner and stroked Margo, the cow tied up on the tiny patch of lawn outside the neighborhood's gourmet coffee shop.*

*He walked down the short flight of stairs and entered the small dark room. It was always dark, even with the blinds open at noon. He sat halfway down the room, facing the door, near the wall, at a table with four chairs. He adjusted his belt and lit a smoke. The girl arrived with his usual coffee. He nodded her away and ordered a tea. His eyes followed her shapely ass when it floated back to the counter. He sighed.*

*A quarter hour later, the tea stood where the girl had left it. In the ashtray, the form of a cigarette lay, the trail of ash where tobacco had burned untouched. He looked out to the street where he had a view of the feet and legs walking by. Behind them, cars crept by in the hot sun.*

*The girl had tried conversation but gave up quickly when he ignored her. He looked out through the glass door into the street. Two pairs of feet stopped before the door. One wore running shoes with three stripes on the sides, and the other wore fake expensive sandals. Stripes wore more stripes on his socks, and more on his green soccer shorts. Sandals had tan pants on that were short enough to reveal ankles, one circled by a gold anklet.*

*He sat up a little, and looked around the room. He took his hat off, and ran his fingers through his hair. He put his hat back on and looked back to the street. The anklet moved closer to Stripes and shifted the weight forward to the toes. Her body rose slightly and the left knee bent to raise the stretched out foot. The anklet reflected the sun into his eyes.*

*He thought back to when he kissed a girl and she raised her foot like that.*

*The leg dropped softly to the ground. Stripes backed away and walked past her. The anklet turned and took one step to follow but stopped. She turned to the cow and paused. Then she bounced down the stairs and into the dark cafe.*

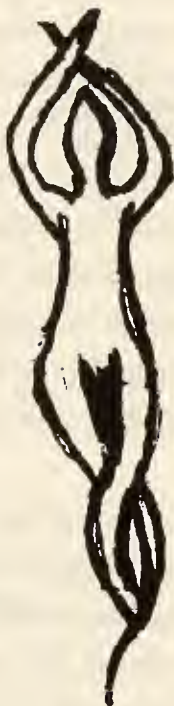
*The light from the street was at her back so he couldn't see her features. but he knew exactly where her nose was, exactly when her eyes blinked and how her mouth formed when she asked the girl for an iced tea. As she stood at the long counter, she turned and scanned the dark empty room. Her gaze stopped when she saw him. She looked back at the door and touched her lips. She looked back at him. He continued to stare at the street.*

*~Jack Kennedy*

*Mother's Love*

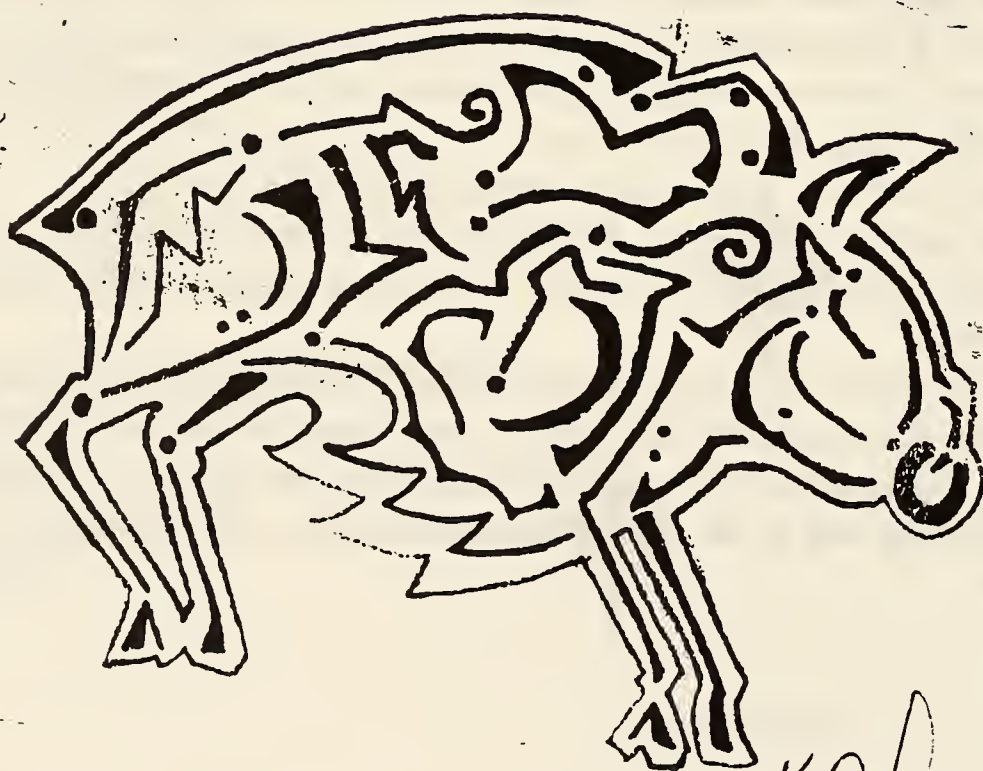
*Lay your head softly  
upon thy waiting sheet  
Close those eyes and  
think of only sweet dreams  
Be safe and secure  
For I am with you  
through the night.  
Wake only when well rested  
and spring readily to my arms.  
For I am with you  
now and forever.  
Lay your head softly  
upon your waiting sheet.  
Blow the day's worries away.  
Smile the day's last smile.  
Kiss me at night and  
at day's first light.  
My child, my love, my life.  
Lay your head softly  
upon thy waiting sheet  
Good Night...*

*Roger A. Currier*



*Space trippin'  
Mind zippin'  
over flowin'  
to the beat that's going  
on and on  
to the funky song  
Body's numb  
going dumb  
I can't describe  
what's happened inside  
Fuzzy haze  
I'm in a daze  
life in a swirl  
stuck in the twirl  
light fleeting from me  
no longer can I see  
Mad twist  
hand on a fist  
faster & faster  
it is my master  
upon me it rushes  
the music gushes  
into my head  
The madness spreads  
Into my heart it seethes  
till I can hardly breath  
Mind flippin'  
Space trippin'*

*~Sean Flynn*



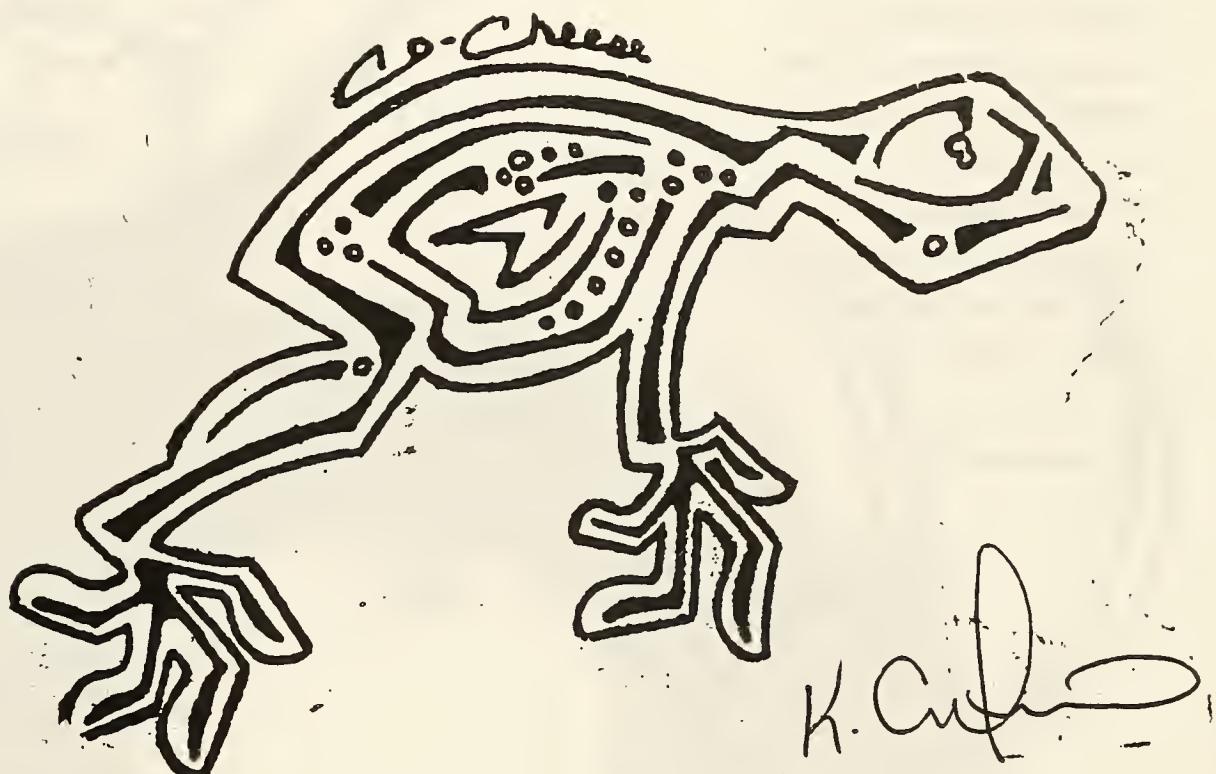
*K. Currier*



## *Daddy*

*The air is cool,  
leaves are crisp  
like the day you left me  
here on these steps  
waiting  
said you'd pick me up  
go to the zoo  
have fun all weekend  
I just sat here on these steps  
the cement so cold  
on my bare legs  
in my best dress,  
for you  
said I looked like an angel,  
a princess,  
your princess  
sun is going down  
getting dark  
shoulder stiff  
waiting  
back inside  
a phone call  
where are you?  
sorry, number disconnected.*

*~Cora Cleveland*



## *Solstice*

*The earth's soil quickens  
Newborn brown mud thickens*

*Frail, painted silk rises  
Trees don their green disguises*

*Hope, small and green  
In all our eyes can be seen*

*Winter dreams once frozen*

*m*

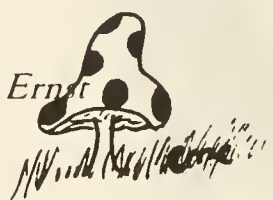
*e*

*l*

*r*

*SPRING HAS COME*

*~Brandi N. Ernst*



*I long for Death's blade  
cutting into my soft skin  
Blood dripping like wax  
on a lit candle  
The taste of blood  
tingling on my tongue  
Dark as the deep sea  
it forms a pool  
Dive in  
be consumed by it  
Die*

~Sarah Cleveland



#### Words

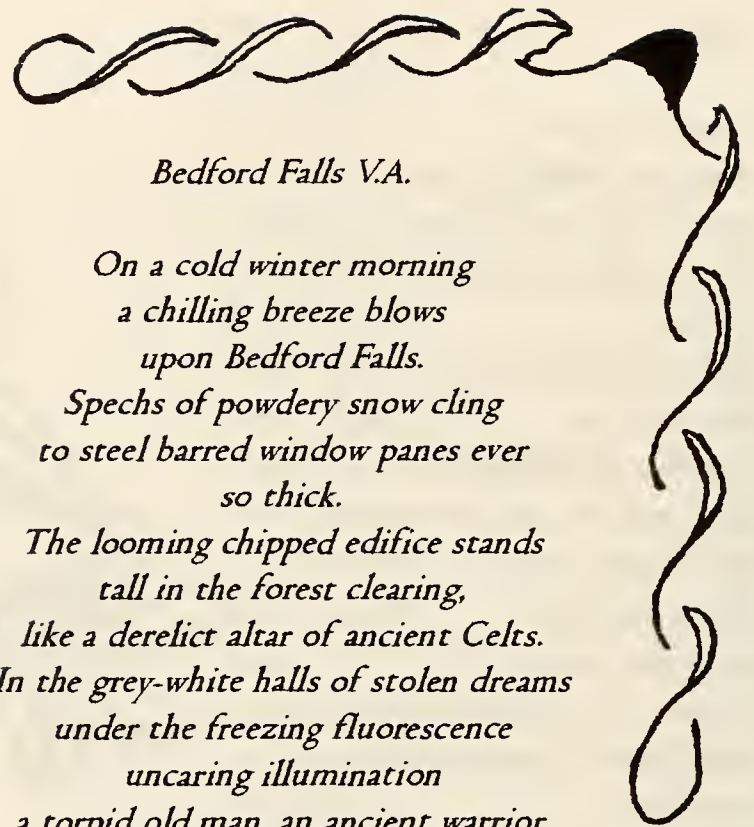
*words are not coming easy  
all jumbled around  
inside my weary head  
nothing's coming out like it should  
like I want it to*

*it's supposed to roll off the tongue  
and be intriguing  
but all that's there are simple things  
that make no sense  
the same things  
over and over again*

*if I could break the cycle  
it might get better  
the problem is  
I don't know how*

*so much inside  
trying to get out  
but some of it  
has no voice*

~Cora Cleveland



#### Bedford Falls V.A.

*On a cold winter morning  
a chilling breeze blows  
upon Bedford Falls.  
Specks of powdery snow cling  
to steel barred window panes ever  
so thick.  
The looming chipped edifice stands  
tall in the forest clearing,  
like a derelict altar of ancient Celts.  
In the grey-white halls of stolen dreams  
under the freezing fluorescence  
uncaring illumination  
a torpid old man, an ancient warrior,  
sticks close to the bricks  
on the grimy tile floor.  
Clad in layers of old woolen rags  
and orange croquette winter hat.  
His lined and wrinkled face an unfitting frame for his eyes  
flooded with the terrified look  
of a small frightened child.  
Unshaven, unwashed, unwanted.  
With a pitying stranger's stare  
and a gust of cold dark winter air,  
he buries his head  
deep in his titan hands.  
Here in the fetal position  
with the cold red bricks  
as his dead placenta  
he lies,  
and here he cries,  
and it is here he will die alone.  
Just beyond reach  
of the solitary gleaming beam  
of sunlight that seeps in  
from the dirty glass door.*

~E.S.P







## *Silver & Gold*

*The rain plays a staccato tune upon the glass,  
accompanying the soprano keen of the wind.  
In the basement the furnace mutters to itself  
as though complaining of the noisy duet outside.  
And snuggled deep into your covers,  
you sleep fitfully through the night,  
subconsciously knowing your world is changing.*

*In the morning, the tune has changed,  
castanets clicking away outside your windows,  
and the air filled with a cellophane-like crackle.  
You open the blinds to a silver landscape  
blending into a predawn gray sky.  
Every twig and blade of grass encased  
in a glass chrysalis... fragile,  
yet giving the appearance of steel.*

*Suddenly, there to the east,  
a streak of light across the horizon.  
And you watch in awe  
as the ever-widening band of morning  
slowly turns the pewter world  
to a glittering, shimmering panorama  
of golden gems. But the beauty is fleeting,  
for the warmth of the day  
will soon turn this sparkling scene  
to everyday dross.*

*~Jeanne Hue*

*We should not dwell  
on that which does not exist  
in a land where no one  
is alive to see it happen.*

*-A.*

## *Castles*

*I saw you in the field  
You're a work of art*

*I saw you dance among the trees  
I feel you dancing in my heart*

*I saw you smile in the moonlight  
You intoxicate me with your eyes*

*I'm drowning in your mystery  
You hide yourself, a clever guise*

*I saw you crying in the shadows  
You won't let anyone know you*

*I could be your shining knight  
If you would only let me show you*

*I saw you in the forest  
All alone like a secret elf*

*The fools all think you dance for them  
I know you dance for yourself*

*~Brandi N. Ernst*



*"Pianos playing all night"*

*When we are asleep we are pianos  
playing all night*

*When we awake we are two glasses of  
sweet wine poured into one  
glass, and we are drunk,  
we are drunk.*

*When the crevices that are actually canyons  
on our lips intertwine  
and we taste the scent of each others breath  
we are alone,  
like death,  
we are alone.*

*When we scavenge the surface  
of our skin, we discover that  
there is moonlight dripping,  
it is a newborn magnetism  
coalescing the fresh skin  
to the beautiful moment  
that we both taste.*

*And life is truly debonair,  
as the waves of affection  
slide through us.  
We, fastidious as two women,  
break away from ourselves  
and reconnect on the other  
side,  
where together we die,  
and are pleased.*

*~Ryan Ragan*

*Contrast*

*The fog is thickening...  
gray,  
and curling around itself  
in the on-and-off-again breeze;  
blanketing the view  
beyond a small measure of feet,  
dampening all which lies below and through it.*

*And the air holds a chill,  
enhanced by the touch of the fog,  
that seeps through your pores to reach your inner  
essence  
and dampens your spirit.  
You find yourself thinking sad thoughts,  
dismal, downbeat,  
matching the weather in mood.*

*But somewhere, in a place unseen,  
sits the sun,  
shining its golden light upon the top side of the clouds,  
never breaking through  
to reach the earth below.*

*Oh, to soar above the murk  
and reach the warmth of the sun!  
To feel the lucent caress upon one's face,  
to glory in the clear and sharp vistas  
that open before you,  
to frolic and laugh and give thanks  
to One who has bestowed upon you such a gift  
as this perfect time.*

*~Jeanne Hue*



K. C.



## *The Doll and the Cocoon*

*Outside, the sound of the rain taps its morse code against my window as I listen. Lulled into empathic communion with its tap tap tap over and over, I curl a bit deeper into the cocoon of my blankets, alone. Anonymous footsteps pound above, a Latin beat vibrates the walls around me, an occasional voice raises and lowers... all nameless, faceless entities, yet I am somehow comforted by them. A siren screams and I stir for a moment, then it becomes just another distant reminder of life. I half open my eyes. The room is streaked with the diffused light from the street lending a dreamlike, magical quality to the small studio. the soft shapes and outlines of the familiar take on a life of their own, the light passing through them as if they were an illusion. Indeed they are ghost from the past -- a time when I was placed in a queen sized bed, and looked through the eyes of a doll molded of cloth and plaster... the eyes never closing. Always seeing but powerless to move. The proud careful lifeless hands of the artist laid next to me, admiring his work. He loved his work. His work. The eyes, wide... innocent, the ears small and delicate so as not to hear the vulgarities of life, the mouth crafted into a perpetual smile. Yes, quite a piece of work. Something to be proud of. But, you know, he could never crush the spirit that pulsed within, and it inevitably found a way to break free.*

*So here I lay in my bed just big enough for one, in the wake of my shattered mold... feeling naked without it, trying on strange new faces that strike such terror deep within that I sometimes try and scramble for the pieces of that broken doll. But always, when I find the jagged piece that holds the eyes, and I see the emptiness and sorrow that even the masters skillful hands could not disguise I let it fall to the ground again. I think of those eyes now and close my own tight in an attempt to rid myself of the haunting vision forever, and open them again... wide, but void of innocence now. The shadow from the raindrops that cling to my window are an endless cascade of tears larger than life, falling one by one as if for the tap tap tap unheard. The tap tap tap unheard. I bury my face in my pillow and join the parade of tears, silent and unheard, as life goes on all around me. Around me and my cocoon.*

*~Beth Robbins*

*"Conformity is the enemy of growth and the jailer of freedom."*

*-J.F.K.*

*"Imagination is more powerful than knowledge."*

*-Albert Einstein*

